

Dear Judge Mehalchick,

I am Vivian McKay, Brian's mother. I spent most of my professional career as a partner at Imagemark Marketing and Advertising. I retired in 2004. I am a cancer survivor, a recovering alcoholic, a widower and mother to Jessica and Brian.

At the age of 16, I found myself pregnant. As with most teenage mom's this drastically changed my life. I married Brian's father, John who was 18. We were babies who had a baby. I stayed home, taking care of Brian, for two years. My jobs prior to Imagemark were, an associate at Walmart, then a receptionist at a local accounting firm, office manager at a physician's office, executive assistant at Westinghouse. I worked to improve our situation and gain experience that I used in my final career.

Brian's father had an alcohol problem. He drank nightly and many times was ugly and abusive. I had never been a drinker and we fought about that a lot. We divorced when Brian was very young, and moved in with my mom. John moved away and left me to raise and support the both of us. Brian and I grew up together.

Shortly after my divorce, I met Alan Oetting and a few years later we married. Looking back, I should have never married him. The only blessing that came from that relationship was Jessie. She became the light of Brian's life. He was 13 and was devoted to her. He was so good with her. He held her whenever he could, and he did everything she needed. He would often take care of her for me when I needed to go out. Her 'brother', as she always called him, did everything she said. She was the boss. Jessie was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy, and Brian was a great caregiver. His love for her was demonstrated through the fun they had, the laughter they shared and how naturally he recognized what she needed and was there as what was happening to her progressed.

Brian was an average student, and prior to high school graduation, his grades slipped even further. He was struggling. Thankfully, with the help of Jean and Ed Gruetzemacher, he was able to improve his grades enough to graduate. Looking back, I recognize that he was tormented terribly by the abuse Alan imposed on him. And, if I'm truthful, my failure to protect him. One of my biggest regrets was not standing up to him to stop him from being so cruel to Brian. Brian and Alan were completely opposite of each other. Brian was not an athlete; Alan and his family were natural athletes. Brian was sensitive and nice, Alan was not. Alan carried himself with a cocky attitude. Brian was gentler in his demeanor. Alan would bully Brian. He made fun of him because Brian was an easy target and I believe Alan felt bigger and stronger and enjoyed pushing him around. Brian's stuttering put an even bigger target on his back. Instead of being able to defend himself verbally, Alan would make fun of Brian when he could not get the words out. Brian stopped trying, and he would retreat to the safety of his room. I look back and I am so sorry about the lasting impact Alan had on Brian.

As an adult, Brian struggled. Not for lack of trying to be successful, but because things never seemed to work out for him. I am sure he was responsible for some of this, but many things that were out of his control kept happening. Jobs came with layoffs, there was never enough money for unexpected expenses and his physical condition led to him losing his position with the

National Guard. His last two jobs finally recognized his abilities. Unfortunately, nationwide cutbacks ended his former position, which led to his securing the position he had prior to his arrest. He was also doing very well and was being given increased responsibilities. He felt he had landed his forever job.

His life seemed to take a turn for the better when he and Angie became friends and roommates. His relationship with Angie and her son brought him the joy and purpose of family. He was so happy and proud to be a part of their lives. Especially experiencing how it feels to be a father who is very involved, supportive, and loving to his 'son'. Even though, Brian was not Cam's natural father, he certainly was in his heart. His priority was being available to provide the support that he needed as well offer encouragement and positive reinforcement of everything Cam engaged in. That included all the sports activities, Cam's commitment to his faith, and helping to set positive expectations. I remember Brian talking about his first big dance and going with Cam to choose his tux. They enjoyed the experience so much. Brian was a good dad to Cam and he loves and misses him terribly.

As an adult, friendships became a bigger part of his life. People enjoyed his company and his sense of humor and kindness were valued. He became involved in the Jaycees. He benefited from the opportunity to connect with other young adults to help with community service projects and improve professional skills. He took on leadership responsibilities eventually becoming President. He was so happy during this time.

Unfortunately, no matter how well things were going, Brian was haunted by his past. He turned to alcohol and when he drank too much everything bad came bubbling up. He would drink too much and would call to talk about how bad things were. Sadly, I know he resented/resents me for many things.

I met the love of my life in 1985. We were married for almost 30 years and he died in March of 2020. As my husband's health was declining, we both turned to alcohol. I took care of Bruce as his illness progressed and when he died, I lost my will to cope with daily life. I had lost my little girl and my soulmate. Brian recognized that I was not doing well and tried to encourage me to stop drinking and take better care of myself. I dismissed him and I was not very nice to him. Family members take the brunt of an alcoholic's destructive tendencies.

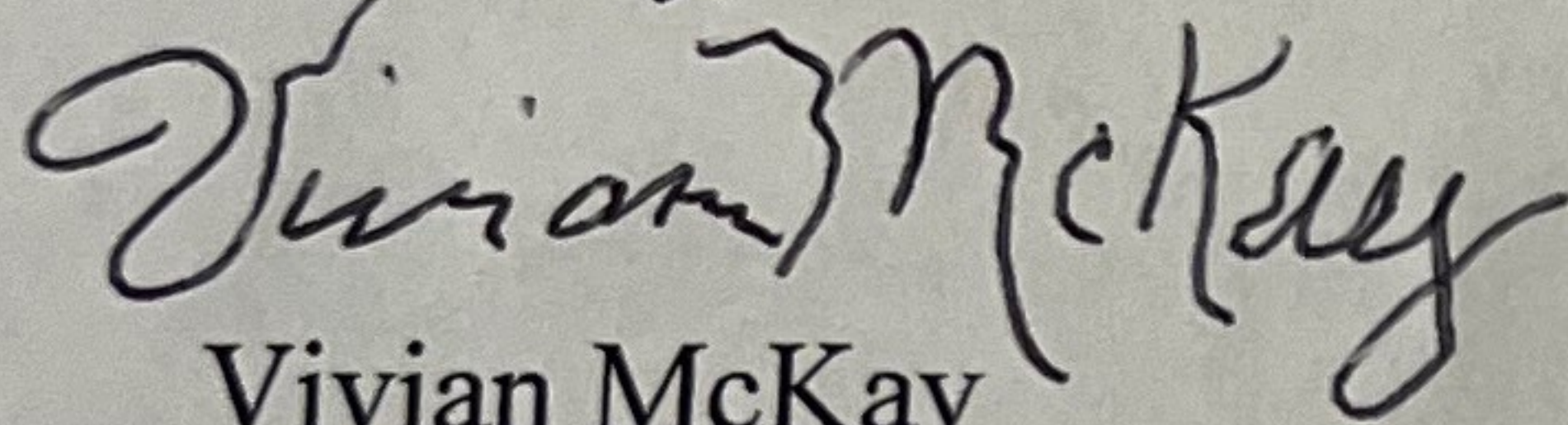
I had fallen many times, and ultimately had to have knee replacement. Brian came and helped me with my recovery. About six months after the surgery, my knee dislocated and Brian came rushing to help. He got an ambulance and spent the night in the ER with me. The process of putting it back in was very painful, and Brian stayed right there for me.

Brian also convinced me to seek treatment at an alcoholic treatment center. I spent a month there and stayed sober for around 8 months. Unfortunately, I was beginning to drink again, and when Brian was arrested, I slipped even further back into the bottle. Thankfully my sister and a friend pulled me out of the lowest I have ever been, and influenced me to give up alcohol. I have been sober since the first of the year.

Brian's absence has brought back the intense grief of losing Jess, my husband and now my only living child. I know he is remorseful and blames only himself. I know he will participate in programs and counseling to rehabilitate himself and come back to us. I cannot help but think of the possibility that I may not live long enough to have Brian back with me. I implore you to please give us the gift of being together again by sentencing Brian to the minimum 15 years. I love Brian very much and I miss him being by my side as I grow older and being able to enjoy time with him. I know he feels the same because we have talked about it. My greatest hope is that Brian can find peace and comfort and that he can be in a safe place to work his way through his problems that have led to these horrible circumstances.

If I can answer any additional questions, please call me at 573-619-0123.  
Thank you for your time reading my letter and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vivian McKay". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Vivian McKay  
Brian's mom